

Fact Sheet

NEBRASKA GAMBLERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (GAP)

What is GAP?

GAP was created to help reduce the impact of problem gambling in Nebraska through quality and effective education and treatment services. The program provides funding for the problem gambling helpline, treatment services, outreach and awareness services, evaluation, and counselor training. GAP is administered by the Nebraska Health and Human Services' Division of Behavioral Health.

What is problem gambling?

It's gambling that causes any kind of emotional, family, legal, financial, or other problems for the gambler or the people around him or her. Pathological gambling is persistent, recurrent, maladaptive gambling behavior that disrupts personal, family, or other pursuits. Like substance abuse, it is a progressive addiction with a similar process of destructiveness to the individual and family.

Who does problem and pathological gambling affect?

Approximately four percent (2.7 million) of American adults experience problem or pathological gambling.¹ That equates to about 55,000 Nebraskans.

Who is receiving treatment?

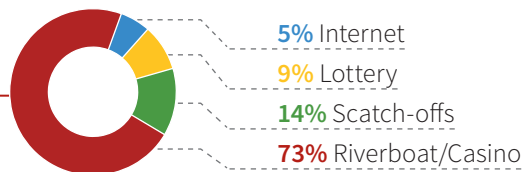
In the past ten years, 3,300 Nebraskans (5.5 percent of the state's total adult population) have received treatment for problem gambling funded through DHHS GAP.² Here's some insight into the demographic makeup of these clients:

22.1 Average age at first gambling experience
(males: 19.6; females: 25.6)

41.5 Average age at admission to treatment

\$32,180 Average client-reported gambling debt

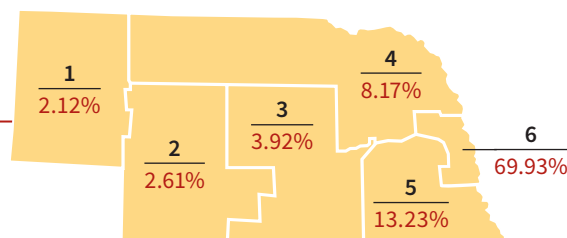
Primary Gambling Preferences for People in Treatment Funded by GAP



Since 2009, more than 1,000 referrals have been made to problem gambling treatment providers in Nebraska. Calls to the problem gambling helpline came from 73 cities. The majority of calls were from Omaha (55.6 percent), followed by Lincoln (8.4 percent) and Bellevue (6 percent).²

Proportion of Helpline Calls by Nebraska Health Planning Region

FY09 - FY13 (Q1 - Q2 & Q3)



Pathological gamblers are 17 times less likely than people who experience substance abuse to receive treatment.³

Are youth at risk?

Over 1.7 million male youth gamble for money online at least once a month.⁴

The number of youth gambling online increased from 4.1 percent in 2007 to 13.5 percent in 2010.⁵ A similar trend has occurred with young adults.

Twenty percent of Nebraska youth reported that they had gambled for money or possessions in the past 12 months. The most common forms of gambling among these youth included betting on sports (69 percent) and playing card games for money (62 percent).⁵

Signs of Problem Gambling

- Increasing time spent gambling
- Increasing size of bets
- Intense interest in gambling activities
- Turning to gambling during stress
- Increased irritability and erratic mood or personality changes
- Feeling depressed or anxious
- Decreased productivity at work, school, or home
- Lying about gambling-related activities and the amount of money spent
- Being evasive about losses
- Spending money earmarked for bills, etc., on gambling
- Borrowing from others to continue gambling

Safe Gambling Tips

When played responsibly, gambling can be an enjoyable source of entertainment for adults. But unfortunately it can also be addictive. The following tips can help minimize the likelihood of problem gambling.

- 1. Set limits on time and money spent.**
- 2. Play for fun, not just for money.**
- 3. Bet only what you can afford to lose.**
- 4. Never borrow to play.**
- 5. Know where to get help.**
- 6. Know when to quit; don't chase your losses.**

Confidential support is available to all Nebraska residents.

Problem Gambling Helpline

1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537)

For a list of problem gambling providers funded by DHHS GAP, go to PlayItSafe.ne.gov.

Prevention works. Treatment is effective. People recover.



Gamblers Assistance Program • DHHS–Division of Behavioral Health

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----- Funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services -----

¹ H. J. Shaffer, M. N. Hall, and J. Vander Bilt. "Estimating the Prevalence of Disordered Gambling Behavior in the United States and Canada: A Research Synthesis." *American Journal of Public Health*, 1999.

² Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Behavioral Health, Gamblers Assistance Program, 2013.

³ Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators, "National Survey of Publicly Funded Problem Gambling Services," 2010.

⁴ Annenberg Public Policy Center, "National Annenberg Survey of Youth," 2010.

⁵ Nebraska Department of Education and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, "Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey," 2010.